4: Hoffman E-4 (no date) 1967 MW11 Shluh MW11 (ca. 1900)

2. *Alliances and Agencies for Negotiation and Arbitration*

The traditional social units of Moroccan rural society, involving increasing segmentation as one moves from the confederation or the tribe to the extended family, do not easily lend themselves to the maintenance of peace and harmony. In the pre-Protectorate period rivalries between different blood groups, strong regionalism, and the attitude that insults to "honor" were best avenged by the vendetta, all tended to override the sense of unity derived from geographical proximity, the use of common markets, and brotherhood in Islam. This tendency was rendered all the more critical in the Berber areas by this ethnic group's traditional antipathy towards any form of centralized political authority.

In the Berber areas these centrifugal forces were traditionally countered and controlled by an elaborate system of religiously inviolable alliances combined with an equally elaborate system of "checks and balances" and agencies for the negotiation, mediation, and arbitration of disputes. These compensating factors, although somewhat slow in operation and therefore often ineffective in preventing local social disturbance, did generally contain the dispute within a small area and thus limit its consequences. Similar institutions were also present in the Arabic-speaking areas of the *Bled el Makhzen*, although some suffered suppression at the hands of the central authority.

a. *Shame Compulsions and Covenants*

In the absence of a central authority with strong police powers, interpersonal and intergroup relationships and alliances in both pre-Protectorate Berber and Arabic-speaking society were rendered binding and inviolable through the use of religious shame compulsion (*'ar*) and covenant (*'ahd*). In Morocco the word *'ar* implies the transference of a conditional curse for the purpose of compelling somebody to grant a request, the power of the conditional curse deriving from the mysterious power inherent in the curse (which may sometimes be reinforced by the invocation of another supernatural power or object). Thus, if a person says to another, *Ha l-'ar alik*, "Here is *'ar* upon you", it implies that if

4: Hoffman E-4 (no date) 1967 MW11 Shluh MW11 (ca. 1900)

626 754 171 the latter does not grant the request some misfortune will befall him on account of the conditional curse contained in the *'ar*. The *'ahd* or covenant differs from the *'ar* in being established by bilateral action – the two parties, by solemn oath, agreeing to carry out some action or to suffer unforeseen retribution (Coon, 1931, pp. 163-164; Westermarck, 1926, Vol. 1, pp. 479, 518-519, 564-569).

Although considered unlawful by Islamic orthodoxy, the *'ar* is nevertheless very widely employed and generally respected in Morocco – although individuals existed even in the traditional society who took no notice of *'ar* cast upon them. The *'ar* and the *'ahd* together constituted an extremely important mechanism not only for inhibiting or forcing individual action in cases of social disturbance, but also for establishing alliances and relationships which circumvented blood and territorial affiliations. These effects were accomplished through "alliances".

b. *Alliances*

609 754 574 171 Five general types of alliances existed, and still exist, in Morocco, serving various purposes and acting on different levels (see Table V). The simplest is that established unilaterally by some traveller for the purpose of securing passage and protection in a foreign territory; it may or may not involve the casting of *'ar*. A traveller, entering the territory of a foreign tribe may either request protection and safe conduct from a native through an appeal to the tribal honor, or he may cast *'ar* upon the native for this purpose by either giving a sacrifice or, more commonly, paying money. The native may or may not grant the first request, but the second allows him no choice. He is duty-bound to see the traveller conducted through the country, either by escorting him personally or by sending a son or friend; [192] furthermore, he is bound to avenge any injury to the traveller. Such protection is termed *mezrag* (literally "spear") by the Arabic-speakers of the plains, and *tazettat* by the Shluh and Zenata; the Beraber refer to it as *amur* if it involves a mere request, and as *tazettat* if *'ar* is cast. Thus, a traveller coming to a village in which he has no friends or acquaintances places himself in the *'ar* of the villagers by the phrase, "I am the guest of God", or by, "We are the guests of God and your guests." He is then given board and